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Directorate D - The human factor, mobility and Marie Curie activities
Unit D3 - Research training networks
The Head of Unit

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Programme "Structuring the European Research Area - Human Resources and Mobility" - Marie-Curie Research Training Networks

Call Identifier : FP6-2002-Mobility-1 Deadline: 3rd April 2003

Subject : Quick Information concerning evaluation of Proposal FP6 - 503928

Dear Dr. Royon,

I would like to inform you that the Commission services, with the help of independent experts, have recently evaluated the proposal "**Physics of Strongly Interacting Particles at Future Colliders: QCD and beyond A joint Programme for Experimentalists and Theoreticians**" submitted in the context of the above mentioned call. You will find attached a copy of the Evaluation Summary Report on this proposal, including the marks awarded, as produced by the independent experts.

The ESR includes comments and scores for each of the evaluation criteria and shows whether your proposal passed all the thresholds. You will notice that the thresholds applied to the different individual criteria as well as to the overall threshold are mentioned after the criteria identification.

The highest ranked proposals, which passed the evaluation thresholds, will normally be invited to enter into contract negotiations with the Commission services. However, the number of such invitations will depend on the Community funding available for supporting proposals under this call. It is expected that the invitations will be sent out towards mid-August 2003. Depending on the budget availability and the expected outcome of the negotiations, a reserve list may be established of the next highest ranking proposals.

For those proposals which did not pass an evaluation threshold (as mentioned in the *"Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Selection Procedures"*¹⁰), a Commission rejection decision will be taken in the near future.

Note, however that this letter only provides information about the preliminary outcome of the evaluation of your proposal. An official and final decision on your proposal will be taken by the Commission in due course.

I would be grateful if you could inform the other partners in this proposal of the content of this letter. For any further inquiries please contact Raymond Monk tel: 00.32.2.298 44 93, e-mail: Raymond.Monk@cec.eu.int.

Yours sincerely,



Bruno SCHMITZ

Encl. Evaluation Summary Report

¹⁰ Available on <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm>.

Evaluation Summary Report for a Marie-Curie Research Training Network

Proposal No. : 503928	Acronym : STRONGNET
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<p>1. Scientific Quality of the Project (<i>Threshold 3/5</i>)</p> <p>The objective of addressing the relevant QCD issues related to LHC physics by a highly qualified team of experimentalists and theorists working together is important, timely and scientifically well justified. However, its implementation in this project suffers from the attempt to incorporate too many different fields of expertise (with physics ranging from HERA to the FLC) without the needed focusing and correlation. At the end, the lack of clear priorities and focus together with the hugeness (in number of teams, groups, scientists involved and number of objectives and tasks) of the project without a strong correlation among the different components pose a severe threat to the possible success of this attempt. At the same time, the scientific level of the hundreds of scientists involved is strongly varying. If the scientific community of QCD theorists is present with its most representative expressions, the same cannot be said for experimentalists with significant variations when moving from one experimental group to the other.</p>	Mark: 3.8
<p>2. Quality of the Training / Transfer of Knowledge Activities (<i>Threshold 4/5</i>)</p> <p>The training programme is particularly intense with an interesting range of activities building on the variety and interdisciplinarity of experimental and theoretical activities. A rich programme of workshops, conferences, schools, visits and secondments is foreseen. Although there is no specific creation of a Personal Career Development Plans, the network takes care of the career development of its YRs both for those remaining in the LHC research area and for those choosing different areas in particle physics. However, the justification for the very large size of the training effort foreseen by the network is questionable. The experimental groups represented in the network already possess large physics working groups with the presence of many YRs. The experimental and theoretical components of such groups already have at disposal quite a few "facilities" where to hold schools and workshops (IPPP-Durham, Les Houches, Erice, the academic training at CERN). Apart from a better definition of the relation between the scientific and training activities of such existing groups and the teams of the network, one can legitimately argue whether, with an overall presence of 370 experienced researchers (including postdocs) and 150 PhD's in the network not RTN paid, the addition of approximately 50 YRs RTN supported is really needed and , more important, if it can efficiently integrate with the existing structures.</p>	Mark: 4.0
<p>3. Quality/Capacity of the Network Partnership (<i>No Threshold</i>)</p> <p>The network collects many of the best QCD theorists and some strong experimental groups we have in Europe . Hence, in terms of individualities we are at the top level we can achieve in Europe (at least as far as phenomenological perturbative QCD at the theory level is concerned). Moreover, some collaborations already exist among different teams and others are likely to positively develop thanks to the network. However, the overall effort of creating an efficient networking may be hindered by a series of factors: a) the unbalance between the theoretical and experimental components and inside the experimental component the unbalance in the degree various experimental groups are represented; b) the very large range of interests with physics ranging from HERA to FLC and with a huge host of theoretical problems to tackle without a clear focus, a specific list of priorities or strategy to cope with such variety; c) the structure of some teams and subteams which are called to face rather challenging problems without an adequate critical mass and/or articulation between the various components . Hence, in spite of the remarkable level of several components, we think that an efficient networking would require a major care and focus to suitably coordinate such different 23 teams into a productive work together.</p>	Mark: 3.4

<p>4. Management and Feasibility (Threshold 3/5)</p> <p>Generally speaking, the teams are of high scientific profile with a good managerial level. In particular, the coordinator and the deputy coordinator possess large managerial experience and the same applies to most of the team leaders. With its steering committee comprising 48 members and a scientific committee of 21 scientists the network is proposing a rather heavy managerial structure, although the very large number of teams may justify it.</p> <p>Concerning the feasibility and credibility of the project, the main arguments a) , b) and c) mentioned in the comment of the above point 3. on networking together with some undisputable difficulty at the managerial level for the unusually large structure of the network cast some doubts on the possible realization of the challenging tasks of this project.</p>	<p>Mark: 3.5</p>
<p>5. Relevance to the Objectives of the Activity (No Threshold)</p> <p>Although the objective of integrating together experimental and theoretical expertises in the field of perturbative QCD retains a high degree of interest in a research area which exhibits a certain fragmentation at the European level, the question remains whether this project represents a concrete chance to overcome such fragmentation. In particular a careful integration with the existing large physics working groups of the experimental collaborations would be needed. Moreover a good balance between expertise and level in the experimental and theoretical components should be clearly envisaged. Objectively with the 23 teams constituting this network we have some difficulty to attribute a great chance to the realization of the abovementioned "unification" effort at the European level.</p>	<p>Mark: 3.5</p>
<p>6. Added Value to the Community (No Threshold)</p> <p>The network proves to efficiently tackle the issue of gender balance (a woman is in charge of the Human Resource Coordination and together with two other women she is going to take care of the gender issues, in particular at the level of hiring YRs).</p> <p>The network will contribute to improve the attractiveness of Europe for YRs in the field. However, this relevant added value to the Community will be effectively reduced by the lack of strong cohesion and focus which we pointed out in the above comments.</p>	<p>Mark: 3.7</p>
<p>Overall remarks (Threshold 70%)</p> <p>The project finds its main strength on a very relevant issue that European particle physics is going to face with particular intensity with the advent of LHC physics in four years from now: in order to realize an efficient exploitation of the relevant LHC results we need a strongly integrated activity of QCD experts at the theoretical and experimental level. Indeed, the network succeeds to collect most of the best QCD theorists we presently have in Europe, physicists who already have a very good record of collaborations (many of them where part of a previous successful theoretical QCD network) and of very high scientific profile. Also at the experimental level we find a large number of qualified components with promising hints for a successful collaboration with the very strong theoretical component. The training aspect is particularly relevant. We need well trained YRs in Europe in a field where the European investment in terms of energy, manpower and money has been particularly high. The network is particularly concerned with this delicate and important aspect. QCD expertise for LHC does not mean that only LHC physics should be involved. Correctly enough, the project points out that other realities where QCD is significantly present (from HERA to Tevatron to FLC) should be adequately represented in a unitary effort to tackle the challenging objectives related to a deeper comprehension of the multiple corners of perturbative QCD.</p>	<p>Total score:</p> <p>3.67 73.4%</p>

Unfortunately, part of all this basic richness of the project is then dispersed when coming to its implementation in a network which in its hugeness (number and quality of teams and number of topics) loses an efficiently guiding focus. First of all the large number of teams exhibits some conspicuous unbalance with some strong teams together with rather weak ones. Even more important appears the unbalance between theorists and experimentalists in the network. While the former component represents the top of theoretical QCD physics we have in Europe, the same can hardly be repeated for the experimental component. Here, while certain experimental groups are adequately represented, others do not share the same level of high scientific impact threatening the achievement of tasks which are certainly rather challenging. The project does not exhibit a clear indication of how to overcome these relevant unbalances. Also the very numerous tasks are pointed out without a clear choice of priorities and a definite focus. Special care should be devoted to obtain an adequate balance between early stage and experienced researchers. Finally, given that a large component of this network comprises physicists who belong to already existing large collaborations, one should discuss how the teams of the project plan to interact with the physics working groups of such collaborations. Otherwise the danger is that little added value comes to the Community in terms of overcoming the existing fragmentation in the field.

Recommendations for project negotiation, (if all thresholds passed):

Has the proposal passed all evaluation thresholds?

NO

YES X